

IRWM Regions in the San Diego Funding Area



Proposed IRWM Planning Approach Strikes Appropriate Balance of Coordination and Independence

Three IRWMs — San Diego IRWM, Upper Santa Margarita IRWM, and South Orange County IRWM — were established to address water resources planning and management in the San Diego Funding Area. Per DWR’s suggestion, the three RWMGs developed five planning region alternatives and evaluated 15 factors to determine the most appropriate and productive approach. The three IRWM regions were originally developed due to multiple regional differentiators:

1. **Water Supply:** Independent water supply agencies drawing from different water sources. Variable dependence on imported water supply across the planning regions.
2. **Wastewater:** Separate wastewater agencies, reclamation plant operators, water recycling programs, and disposal/export practices.
3. **Groundwater:** Different level of dependence on groundwater supply across the planning regions.
4. **Land Use Planning:** Different local and regional land use planning authorities and transportation programs.
5. **Flood Protection:** Independent flood control agencies and programs.
6. **Runoff Water Quality:** Separate NPDES Municipal Storm Water (MS4) permits, urban runoff management planning, and regional water quality outreach programs.
7. **Environmental Resources:** Different habitat conservation planning efforts and nature reserves.
8. **Political Realities:** Separate legal (both regulatory and legislative), taxing, and funding authorities.

Communication was initiated between the three RWMGs to address ongoing water resources challenges, including water supply and water quality issues associated with recycled water discharges to the Santa Margarita River watershed.

Establishment of an inter-regional body — Tri-County Funding Area Coordinating Committee (FACC) — will allow the three RWMGs to balance the necessary autonomy of each planning region to plan at the appropriate scale with the need to improve inter-regional cooperation and efficiency. To address DWR’s concerns, the three planning regions are committed to identifying cross-boundary projects and common programs to address key challenges. This approach will capture the integration of water supply, wastewater, and watershed planning across regions in three coordinated IRWMs.

San Diego Funding Area Collaboration



